

## APPENDIX C

# SNIPERS

*SBCT infantry companies and battalions use snipers extensively in all operations. Snipers can significantly increase the company's combat power if utilized correctly.*

### C-1. SNIPER CHARACTERISTICS AND PLANNING

The SBCT infantry company employs snipers in three-man teams, each consisting of a sniper, an observer, and one man who secures the team. The senior man in the team is the observer, the next most senior is the sniper, and the junior man secures the sniper team. Normally, the observer and the security man carry an M4 or M203, and the sniper carries the chosen sniper weapon. Sniper teams should avoid sustained battles. During long periods of observation, team members help each other with range estimation, round adjustment, and security.

a. Sniper teams should be centrally controlled by the commander but may be task-organized to platoons. Once deployed, sniper teams must be able to operate independently, as required. Therefore, they must understand the commander's intent, his concept of the operation, and the purpose for their assigned mission. This understanding allows the sniper teams to exercise responsible initiative within the framework of the commander's intent and to support the commander's concept and achievement of the unit's mission. To ensure clear fields of fire and observation, the teams must be able to choose their own positions once they are on the ground. Sniper teams are effective only in areas that offer good fields of fire and observation.

b. Sniper teams should move to a release point with a security element (squad or platoon) when possible. The sniper team moves on its own after reaching the release point, which allows the team to reach its area of operations faster and more safely than if it went alone from the start point. A security element can also protect the sniper section during operations. When moving with a security element, snipers follow these guidelines:

(1) The leader of the security element leads the sniper team.

(2) Snipers must appear to be an integral part of the security element. Thus, the sniper team should carry the sniper weapon system in line with and close to the body to hide its outline and barrel length and should conceal from view all sniper-unique equipment such as optics and ghillie suits. The team also should maintain proper intervals and positions in the element formation and wear the same uniform as that of element members.

c. History has proven that a commander who employs snipers intelligently, skillfully, and with originality gains a payoff far greater than expected. Therefore, it is essential that a company commander understand the proper employment of sniper teams. If a company commander knows the abilities and limitations of a sniper team, then the team can contribute significantly to the fight. A company commander should consider carefully all the factors of METT-TC to determine proper employment of sniper teams.

(1) **Mission Analysis.** The sniper team's primary concern is to support combat operations by delivering precise rifle fire from concealed positions. The mission assigned to a sniper team for a particular operation consists of the task(s) that the company commander wants the sniper team to accomplish and the purpose for each task. The commander must decide how he wants his sniper team to affect the battlefield; then he

must assign missions to achieve this effect. The company commander must prioritize targets so the sniper team can avoid involvement in sustained engagements. Regardless of the method used, the sniper team must be free to exercise responsible initiative by changing targets to continue to support the commander's intent.

(a) The company commander may describe the effect or result he expects and allow the sniper team to select key targets. Whether he does this depends on the sniper team's skills and on how well he trusts them.

(b) He may assign specific types of targets. For example, if he wants to disrupt the defensive preparations of the enemy, he may want the sniper team to kill bulldozer and other engineer equipment operators. He may want them to disable vehicles carrying supplies, or he may want them to engage soldiers digging enemy defensive positions.

(c) He also may assign specific targets. These can include leaders, command and control operators, ATGM gunners, armored-vehicle commanders, or crew-served weapons crews.

(2) **Enemy Analysis.** The commander must consider the composition, disposition, strengths, capabilities, weaknesses, and characteristics of the enemy. Is the enemy force heavy or light, rested or tired, disciplined or not? Is it motorized infantry or towed artillery? Is it well-supplied or severely short of supplies? Is the enemy patrolling aggressively or does he have minimal security? Is he positioned in assembly areas or dug in? The answers to such questions help the company commander determine the enemy's susceptibility and reaction to effective sniper team employment. Naturally, a well-rested, well-led, well-supplied, and aggressive enemy with armored protection poses a greater threat to a sniper team than an enemy who is tired, poorly led, poorly supplied, lazy, and unprotected. The company commander Also needs to know if enemy snipers are present and if they are effective. Enemy snipers can pose a significant danger to the company sniper team. The sniper team can assist the commander in determining or countering the enemy sniper threat. A sniper has expert knowledge of sniping and likely enemy hiding places; he can normally engage enemy marksmen and irregulars at a greater range than the enemy sniper can engage the company.

(3) **Terrain Analysis.** The commander must evaluate the terrain in the sniper's area of operations, the terrain he must travel to reach it, and the time and effort snipers will expend getting into position. He must also consider the effect of weather on the sniper and on his visibility. The snipers will need good firing positions. They prefer positions at least 300 meters from their target area. Operating at this distance allows them to avoid effective fire from enemy rifles, yet they retain much of the 800- to 1,000-meter effective range of the sniper rifle. To be most effective, snipers need areas of operations with adequate observation and fields of fire.

(4) **Troop Analysis.** The company commander must decide how to employ all available assets. (Along with the company sniper section, each squad has a designated marksman). Much depends on soldier availability, the duration of the operation, the expected opposition, and the number and difficulty of tasks and targets assigned to the sniper team and the designated marksmen. Commanders also must consider the level of training and physical conditioning of the sniper team and the designated marksmen.

(5) **Time Analysis.** The company commander must consider how much time the sniper team will have to achieve the expected result. The sniper team needs time to plan, coordinate, prepare, rehearse, move, and establish positions. A company commander

must know and accept the increased risk of sniper team employment when the team lacks adequate time for planning or for other preparations such as moving to the area of operations.

(a) The amount of time a sniper team can remain in a position without losing effectiveness due to eye fatigue, muscle strain, or cramps depends mostly on the type of position. A sniper team usually can remain in an expedient position for 6 hours before it must be relieved. It can remain in the belly position or the semi-permanent hide for up to 48 hours before the team must be relieved. Mission duration times average 24 hours. (FM 23-10 provides guidance on sniper position considerations, construction, preparation, and occupation.)

(b) Movement factors for a sniper team moving with a security element are the same as for any infantry force. When a sniper team moves alone in the area of operations, it moves slowly, with its movement measured in feet and inches. The sniper team is the best source for determining an accurate time estimate for a particular movement.

(6) **Civilian Considerations.** In cases where large crowds pose a threat to US forces, a sniper team can single out selected individuals. In populated areas where casualties should be kept to a minimum, the sniper team can be assigned to destroy enemy snipers.

## C-2. EMPLOYMENT DURING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Offensive operations carry the fight to the enemy to destroy his capability and will to fight. By destroying enemy targets that threaten the success of the attack, the sniper team can play a major role in offensive operations.

a. **Offensive Operations.** During offensive operations, a sniper team may perform the following:

- Destroy enemy snipers.
- Overwatch movement of friendly forces and suppress enemy targets that threaten the moving forces.
- Place precision rifle fire on enemy crew-served weapons teams and into exposed bunker apertures.
- Place precision rifle fire on enemy leaders, armored-vehicle drivers or commanders, forward observers, and other designated personnel.
- Place precision rifle fire on small, isolated, or bypassed enemy forces.
- Place precision rifle fire on enemy forces fleeing or threatening a counterattack.
- Screen a flank.
- Secure key terrain by controlling access to it with precision rifle fires.

b. **Movement to Contact.** During a movement to contact, a company commander has two sniper team employment options: the sniper team can move with the lead element, or the commander can employ the sniper team 24 to 48 hours prior to the company's movement to--

- Select positions.
- Gather information about the enemy.
- Secure key terrain, preventing enemy surprise attacks.

c. **Mounted Attack.** During a mounted attack, the company's rapid movement limits the sniper team's role. However, when the company dismounts the infantry squads, the sniper team can be employed to support the dismounted assault.

d. **Raid.** During a raid, the sniper team can be employed with either the security element or the support element--

- To cover avenues of approach and any escape routes that lead in to and out of the objective.
- To cover friendly routes of withdrawal to the rally point.
- To provide long-range rifle fires on the objective.

e. **Consolidation.** After consolidation, the sniper team may displace forward to new positions. These positions need not be on the objective. However, the sniper team must be able to place precision rifle fire on bypassed enemy positions, enemy counterattack forces, or other enemy positions that could degrade the company's ability to exploit the success of the attack.

### C-3. EMPLOYMENT DURING DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

A sniper team may effectively enhance or augment any company's defensive fire plan. After analyzing the terrain, the sniper team should recommend options to the company commander.

a. **Defensive Operations.** During defensive operations, a sniper team may perform the following:

- Overwatch obstacles and demolitions.
- Perform counterreconnaissance (destroy enemy reconnaissance elements).
- Engage enemy observation posts, armored-vehicle commanders exposed in turrets, and ATGM teams.
- Damage enemy vehicle optics to degrade movement.
- Suppress enemy crew-served weapons.
- Disrupt enemy follow-on units with long-range rifle fire.

b. **Primary Positions.** Sniper teams are generally positioned to observe or control one or more avenues of approach into the defensive position. The types of weapons systems available to the sniper team may lead the company commander to use his sniper team against secondary avenues of approach to increase all-round security and to allow him to concentrate his combat power against the most likely enemy avenue of approach. Sniper teams may support the company by providing precise extra optics for target acquisition and long-range rifle fires to complement those of the M249 machine gun. This arrangement best utilizes the company's weapons systems. Sniper teams may also be used in an economy-of-force role to cover dismounted enemy avenues of approach that the company cannot cover with other available assets.

c. **Alternate and Supplementary Positions.** A sniper team establishes alternate and supplementary positions for all-round security. Positions near the FEBA are vulnerable to concentrated enemy attacks, enemy artillery, and obscurants. The sniper team and designated marksmen can be positioned for surveillance and mutual fire support. If possible, they should establish positions in depth for continuous support during the fight. The sniper's rate of fire neither increases nor decreases as the enemy approaches. Specific targets are systematically and deliberately shot; accuracy is far more important than speed.

d. **Overwatch.** The sniper team can be placed to overwatch key obstacles or terrain such as river-crossing sites, bridges, and minefields that canalize the enemy directly into engagement areas. Sniper weapons are mainly used where other weapons systems are less

effective due to security requirements or terrain. Even though the company commander has access to weapons systems with greater ranges and optical capabilities than those of the sniper weapons, he may be unable to use these for any of several reasons. Unlike sniper weapons, the other weapons systems may present too large a firing signature, be difficult to conceal, create too much noise, or be needed more in other areas. The sniper team can provide the company commander with greater observation capability and killing range than other subordinate units.

e. **Counterreconnaissance.** The sniper team can be used as an integral part of the counterreconnaissance effort. The team can help acquire and destroy targets. It can augment the counterreconnaissance element by occupying concealed positions for long periods. It also can observe direct and indirect fires (to maintain their security) and engage targets. Selective long-range rifle fires are difficult for the enemy to detect. A few well-placed shots can disrupt enemy reconnaissance efforts, force him to deploy into combat formations, and deceive him as to the location of the main battle area. The sniper team's stealth skills counter the skills of enemy reconnaissance elements. The sniper team can be used where infantry platoon mobility is unnecessary, freeing squad designated marksmen to cover other sectors. The sniper team also can be used to direct ground maneuver elements toward detected targets. This helps to maintain their security so they can be used against successive echelons of attacking enemy.

f. **Strongpoint.** The commander employs the sniper team to support any unit defending a strongpoint. The sniper team's characteristics enable it to independently harass and observe the enemy in support of the force in the strongpoint, either from inside or outside the strongpoint.

g. **Reverse-Slope Defense.** The sniper team can provide effective long-range rifle fires from positions forward of the topographical crest or on the counterslope if the company is occupying a reverse-slope defense.

#### C-4. EMPLOYMENT DURING STABILITY OPERATIONS

During stability operations, US troops are usually required to use a minimal amount of force to respond to threats. Even with well-understood ROE, it may be difficult for an SBCT infantry company to respond with minimum force rather than maximum force when confronted with certain situations. The sniper team is an important tool for the company commander during stability operations.

- a. During stability operations, a sniper team may perform the following:
  - Conduct active or passive countersniper missions.
  - Overwatch a checkpoint.
  - Monitor a public gathering.
  - Identify critical people in a crowd.
  - Reinforce a base camp's security.
  - Conduct any offensive or defensive sniper mission.
- b. The sniper team provides the company commander the required minimum force (or an equal or reasonable response to force used against the company) through its precision long-range rifle fires.
- c. Sniper teams also provide the company commander with a ready source of information to counter a perceived sniper threat. Through the team's understanding of sniping and sniper hiding places, it can provide the commander with invaluable

information. The company commander incorporates this information into his METT-TC analysis to develop a countersniper plan.

### **C-5. ACTIONS IN A BUILT-UP AREA**

The unlimited use of firepower during urban operations may undermine the commander's intent. The sniper team is an incredible asset to the SBCT infantry company commander while operating in a built-up area.

a. **Offensive Operations.** Assaulting forces usually encounter fortified positions prepared by the defending force. These can range from field-expedient, hasty positions produced with locally available materials to elaborate steel and concrete emplacements complete with turrets, underground tunnels, and crew quarters. Field-expedient positions are those most often encountered. However, the company commander should expect elaborate positions when the enemy has significant time to prepare his defense. The enemy may have fortified weapons emplacements or bunkers, protected shelters, reinforced natural or constructed caves, entrenchments, and other obstacles.

(1) The enemy will try to locate these positions so they are mutually supporting and arrayed in depth across the width of his sector. The enemy also will try to increase his advantages by covering and concealing positions and by preparing direct fire plans and counterattack contingencies. Because of this, fortified areas should be bypassed and contained by a smaller force.

(2) Sniper precision fire and observation capabilities are invaluable in the assault of a built-up area. Precision rifle fire can readily detect and destroy pinpoint targets invisible to the naked eye. The sniper team's role during the assault of a fortified position is to deliver precision long-range rifle fire against the embrasures, air vents, and doorways of key enemy positions; against observation posts; and against exposed personnel. The company commander must plan the sequence in which the sniper team will destroy targets. This should systematically reduce the enemy's defenses by denying the ability of enemy positions to support each other. Once these positions are isolated, they can be more easily reduced. Therefore, the company commander must decide where he will try to penetrate the enemy's fortified positions and then employ his sniper team against those locations. The sniper team can provide continuous fire support for both assaulting and other nearby units when operating from positions near the breach point on the flanks. Its precision rifle fires add to the effectiveness of the entire company. Frequently, when various factors prevent the use of other precision weapons, such as Javelins, snipers are still useful.

(3) The sniper team plans based on information available. The enemy information needed by a sniper team includes the following:

- Extent of and exact locations of individual and underground fortifications.
- Fields of fire, directions of fire, number and locations of embrasures, and types of weapons systems in the fortifications.
- Locations of entrances, exits, and air vents in each emplacement and building.
- Locations and types of existing and reinforcing obstacles.
- Locations of weak spots in the enemy's defense.

b. **Defensive Operations.** The sniper precision-fire and observation capabilities are equally invaluable in the defense of a built-up area. As in the offense, the sniper team detects and destroys targets that are invisible to the naked eye. The company commander

generally positions the sniper team to observe or control one or more avenues of approach into the built-up area. This focus generally is on secondary avenues of approach. This employment option allows the commander to concentrate the majority of his combat power against the enemy's most likely avenue of approach while still having a formidable force on the secondary avenue of approach. The company commander can also position the sniper team and the squad designated marksmen to support or complement each other. Finally, the company commander can employ the sniper team to independently harass and observe the enemy in support of the company's mission.